



Understood® Annual Report



**Shaping the world
for difference®**

Our vision

Together, we can shape the world for difference

The mother of a child with ADHD whose outbursts in public leave her feeling judged as a parent. The young teen who longs to have friends but is bullied at school for not fitting in. The teachers and pediatricians who want to reassure concerned families that their loved one is no less intelligent because of dyslexia. Every person who wants to dispel the myth that learning and thinking differences are weaknesses.

Understood.org is the leading organization dedicated to providing solutions and support for the nearly 70 million Americans — including one in five children — who have learning and thinking differences, like dyslexia and ADHD. Our work is grounded in an even larger vision: shaping the world for difference so that all people who learn and think differently can thrive at every stage of life.

Changing perceptions, building community

Over the last decade, we've built and sustained an active community in the U.S. of 10 million individuals, families, and care providers. But this is just a fraction of the millions of people who need resources that only we can provide.

Today, we're on a journey to scale our impact. By 2030, we're committed to expanding our reach so that 100 million people, including individuals with learning and thinking differences and their supporters, can achieve their goals with confidence and support. Read on to learn how we're working to reach this ambitious goal.

The Understood approach

In the nearly 10 years since Understood.org was created, we have evolved and grown to bring new understanding to the needs of people whose lives are touched by learning and thinking differences, like ADHD and dyslexia.

Yet, from our very first days, the mission that connects us to our community has remained the same: to shape the world for difference so that every person has the tools and opportunities to thrive and realize their goals.

At Understood.org, this means coupling expert-driven qualitative and quantitative research to forge new insights into how individuals learn and process information. This enables us to create a growing ecosystem of services and support for raising the bar at school, in the workplace, and in everyday life so that people with learning and thinking differences feel less alone and more understood.

Who are you shaping the world for?



Watch 1:30



Understood.org's Knowledge Team has conducted numerous proprietary studies, meta-analysis reviews, and thousands of in-depth interviews with individuals and children who learn and think differently, their parents, teachers, and doctors.

2014

Year Understood.org was founded

3,000+

Number of articles, printables, and other resources we offer in English and Spanish

70+

Experts we work with, representing a wide range of fields

450+

People touched by learning and thinking differences we interviewed to inform our work

“While not everything is measurable, all the things we do are impactful.”

— Fred Poses, Founder & CEO



Our impact

Build confidence. Reduce stigma. Drive advocacy — these three pillars build on our mission and the core beliefs that guide us in delivering leading-edge resources and services that engage, inspire, and activate the communities we serve.

[Learn more](#)

What if everyone had the same opportunity to thrive?

With your support, we can shape the world for difference by ensuring that the millions of people who learn and think differently will have the tools and support they need to overcome obstacles and thrive.

[Donate now](#)



Driving outcomes, changing lives

At Understood.org, we're creating something extraordinary. We're building an active, inclusive, and growing community dedicated to helping individuals with ADHD, dyslexia, and other learning and thinking differences thrive. We aim for all of them to discover their strengths, overcome challenges, and understand that there's an important place in the world for them and their unique talents.

Guiding our work is a framework that focuses on three Pillars for Change.

1

Build confidence

More than 10 million people in the U.S. come to Understood.org each year to access our expert-vetted resources and to build confidence in themselves and others.

One of the most impactful solutions we launched in the last year was **Wunder**, the first community app for parents of kids with learning and thinking differences, like ADHD and dyslexia. A safe space where parents can connect, ask questions, and get expert support — all for free. Another is **Take N.O.T.E.**, a simple step-by-step tool that helps families and teachers identify ADHD, dyslexia, and other learning and thinking differences in children, and guides them on next steps. Since its launch, Take N.O.T.E. has reached 24 million parents, 3.2 million educators, and 278,000 pediatricians, nurses, and other health care professionals in the U.S.

The more engaged people are with resources like Wunder and Take N.O.T.E., the more assured they feel. For example, 41% of parents who accessed Understood.org five or more times in the last six months reported feeling confident after engaging with us, versus 22% of parents who engaged one-to-two times in the last six months.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE



Our free community app enables parents and caregivers to share information and access resources and tips in an inclusive environment, while getting immediate support from a team of leading experts.

4.7/5.0

App store rating

400+

Conversations sparked each month

700+

Members in 25 different community groups

“We had to pivot from an IEP to a 504 for our son. It was nerve-wracking. We needed trusted information on the fly, so I went straight to Wunder. Having that information at our fingertips helps us to stay calm through the process. Our son is taking honors science now that he has a 504.”

— Diana S., mother of a 13-year-old with dyslexia and dysgraphia

A quick look at Wunder

▶ Watch

2

Reduce stigma

People today know more about ADHD and dyslexia than previous generations. Despite this, stigma persists, perpetuating stereotypes that often keep individuals with learning and thinking differences from seeking the help and understanding they need to thrive.

Understood.org empowers people to speak up and take action by providing resources, tools, and supportive community spaces that can help them overcome barriers to change.

For example, our **Be the Reason** campaign was created to raise awareness of learning and thinking differences among parents who are skeptical or unaware that these differences exist. The campaign, which reached 24 million parents, encourages them to connect with their kids around the stigmas and biases they may be facing, and be the reason their child thrives.

We also expanded our **Understood Podcast Network** with programming that includes *In It, ADHD Aha!*, and *The Opportunity Gap*, to bring real talk and new perspectives to the everyday challenges and triumphs of people who learn and think differently. These and other Understood.org programs are enabling people impacted by learning and thinking differences to share their lived experiences with a wider audience, advocate for their rights, and act as a catalyst for change.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Be the Reason campaign

Created to help shift perceptions around learning and thinking differences, and turn skepticism into support.

24M

App store rating

100K

Nearly
100K minds
changed

99.4%

Confidence level that the shift
in mindset was attributable to
the campaign videogroups

“The truth is, I’m not behind. Nor am I moving at a slower pace than ‘normal.’ How I get to my goals — and the pace I get there — should only matter to me. It shouldn’t be open to the opinions of others. I’m moving at a pace that I know is best for me. And that pace will make me successful, even with my ADHD.”

— Maya Flores

Be the Reason
campaign video

▶ Watch

3

Drive advocacy

As the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped our lives and communities, it also unveiled systemic inequalities in education, health care, and the workplace. We have to bridge these gaps to build a more inclusive and equitable society. At Understood.org, we're channeling this focus into new resources to drive real, substantive change.

As our proprietary studies, meta-analysis reviews, and in-depth interviews yield insights into what people with ADHD, dyslexia, and other learning and thinking differences need to thrive, we're turning them into new personalized tools and resources. We're also leveraging social media channels to create supportive environments where people can share experiences, build community, and advocate for themselves and others. And we're creating an ecosystem for employers, educators, health care providers, and others who support people who learn and think differently. Most recently, we created a resource with conversation starters for teachers and pediatricians to use when talking with families about learning and thinking differences and how to advocate for their child.



A journey of discovery

Understood.org provides a growing hub of resources, tools, and tips that supports visitors in their understanding of learning and thinking differences and in moving toward their goals with greater confidence. An example of this journey via podcasts is shown below.



“My name is Erin and I recently stumbled upon your podcast. I am obsessed, I love listening to everyone’s stories and I have several ‘aha’ moments during each episode.”

— **Erin**, a podcast listener who went from searching for information about ADHD to becoming a guest on the Understood.org podcast *ADHD Aha!*

The resources Understood.org provides are making a measurable difference. Our recent Thriving Survey found that increased engagement with Understood.org leads to significant improvements in thriving.

In fact, children whose parents engaged more frequently with us (5+ times in the last six months) thrive at a higher rate. Children whose parents engaged with us longer (3+ years) and those whose parents used more of our resources (3+ Understood.org resources) also thrive at a higher rate.

“Before I was a dyslexic design thinker, before I was a creative director, before I even knew I was dyslexic, I was just a kid trying to figure out how my mind worked. Working together with Understood, I’m exploring my relationship with dyslexia and seeing how each step along the way led me to where I am today.”

— **Gil Gershoni**

Together, let's shape the world for difference.

With your support, we can help the millions of people who learn and think differently overcome challenges and thrive.

Donate now

We couldn't do our crucial work without the help and dedication of our board members and supporters.

Board members



Nancy Poses
Chair of the board and secretary

Ms. Poses is currently vice chairman for the Whitney Museum. She has dedicated her life to shaping the world for difference. Ms. Poses is co-founder of Understood and has been instrumental in the development and launch of Understood. Prior to that, she played an active role with the National Center for Learning Disabilities for 15 years. Ms. Poses is also the driving force behind the Poses Family Foundation, which focuses on initiatives related to learning and thinking differences, education, literacy, and assistive technology. She serves on the board of trustees at the Riverview School, where her son Max graduated. She is a member of the board of directors at PASE (Partnership for Afterschool Education) and at the Drawing Center. She holds an EdM in counseling from Teachers College, Columbia University.



Laurie Siegel

Ms. Siegel serves as the president of LAS Advisory Services to develop and execute high performance organizational structures, teams and reward systems. Ms. Siegel has served as a business and human resources consultant since 2012 after retiring from Tyco International Ltd., where she served as chief human resources officer. She has also held executive positions with Honeywell International Inc. and Avon Products and was a principal of Strategic Compensation Associates.



Mary Beth Gustafsson

Ms. Gustafsson is senior vice president and business advisor at ITT. She joined ITT in 2014 to serve as senior vice president, general counsel of ITT. Ms. Gustafsson previously served as general counsel and secretary and chief compliance officer for First Solar. Ms. Gustafsson formerly held senior legal leadership positions at Trane Inc. (formerly American Standard Companies Inc.), including general counsel and secretary, as well as at Honeywell International Inc. She earned her bachelor of arts degree in English literature from Boston University and her Juris Doctor from the University of Michigan.



Kenneth deRegt

Mr. deRegt joined Neuberger Berman in 2018, where he serves as the COO for Fixed Income and Manager of Issuer. Prior to this work, Mr. deRegt was the managing director and the global head of Fixed Income Sales and Trading of Morgan Stanley, and served on its management committee. Mr. deRegt rejoined Morgan Stanley in February 2008 from Aetos Capital, where he was a managing director. He serves on the board of directors of Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI), Inc. and KKR Financial. Mr. deRegt is also a member of the advisory board of the Freeman-Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University and the former board chair for the Eagle Hill School. He holds a BA in economics from Stanford University.



Mary Quick

Ms. Quick is a philanthropist dedicated to child education and welfare. Her efforts are focused towards organizations that support and cultivate the needs of underprivileged and disabled children by placing them in equal-opportunity environments. Through her participation on multiple boards, Ms. Quick has been influential in helping children with learning disabilities succeed at school, at home and in the community. As a board member, she helps to establish policies, oversee practices for internal operations, hire and evaluate officers, and ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards. Ms. Quick will, along with the rest of the board, serve as a steward of the financial and reputational assets of Understood, and with governing in a manner that is consistent its mission and charitable purpose.



Justin Gray

Mr. Gray is the president and CEO of Gray Global Advisors LLC (GGA), a full-service business advisory firm that specializes in the strategic implementation of government affairs and business consulting services for public and private corporations, foreign governments, educational institutions, trade associations, foundations, and nonprofits. He leads the operations of the firm's numerous practice areas and is responsible for the management of the Washington, D.C. office. Mr. Gray also serves as chairman of the board of trustees for Riverview School in East Sandwich, MA, a co-educational residential school for children with complex learning and cognitive disabilities.



Michael Kosnitzky

Mike Kosnitzky, co-leader of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman's Private Client & Family Office practice, advises some of the world's most well-respected individuals, families and privately held businesses, using a holistic risk-assessment approach to the law. Pillsbury is a 153-year-old international law firm with nineteen offices around the world, including in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Silicon Valley, Austin, Houston, Miami, Palm Beach, London, Beijing, Tokyo, and Hong Kong. Mike focuses his practice on structuring family offices, federal tax law, estate and trust planning, family foundations and charitable giving, structuring private aircraft ownership, art and collectibles matters, legacy real estate planning, and other legal matters of interest to the wealthy.



Jacob Poses Treasurer of the board

Jacob Poses has created, counseled, and led teams at some of the world's most promising emerging digital products. He is currently the director of product at LinkedIn, where he drives the video, creator, and events experience.

Previously, Mr. Poses was co-founder and CEO of Jumprope, a place where passionate and knowledgeable makers are able to create and share step-by-step videos on topics ranging from cooking to fitness, beauty and more.

Additionally, Mr. Poses was on the executive team and acted as VP of product for Thumbtack where he was responsible for customer experience, growth and monetization, and helped take the company to a \$1.25B valuation though five rounds of funding. He has received his education from Duke University and Stanford University.

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 **W3C**[®]

Financials

Imagine a world where stigma is eliminated and differences are celebrated.

This is our vision. Ambitious? Yes. Achievable? Absolutely, but it will take the support of the larger community.

Our decision to reclassify Understood.org as a public charity this year will enable us to receive support from a broader range of sources — from generous individual donors and charitable foundations to government agencies and corporate partners. It will also give us greater freedom in how we develop and deliver new programs and solutions for the communities we serve.

We'll share with you the financial impact of our work and our fundraising on those efforts in our next annual report.

Together, let's shape the world for difference.

With your support, we can help the millions of people who learn and think differently overcome challenges and thrive.

[Donate now](#)

